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ABSTRACT

This report on school holding power provides statistics on students who withdrew from the Pittsburgh public schools during the 12 months ending June 30, 1985. Data is classified in the following ways: (1) by grade of the students who dropped out, (2) by circumstances under which students dropped out, and (3) by individual schools within the system. The report includes a definition of drop-out and the formulas used to compute annual and cumulative holding power of a school. (LHW)

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A STUDY OF SCHOOL HOLDING POWER

SCHOOL YEAR 1984-1985

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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FOREWORD

The study of school holding power includes all students who withdrew from school before graduation, during the twelve month period ending June 30, 1985. The data was primarily derived from CAPAS (Computer Aided Pupil Accounting System). The preparation of tables was the responsibility of the Department of Pupil Services, Office of School Management. Attention is called to the following specifics which explain the method of reporting drop-outs for the school year 1984-1985.

1. Two directives from the Department of Public Instruction in Harrisburg affect the holding power study:

   Students transferring into Federal programs such as Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Manpower Development Training are not to be included among drop-outs, but are considered as transferees to other educational agencies.

2. Deceased students are not listed as drop-outs.

3. Students who had previously dropped-out, re-entered and are dropping out for a second time may be included in the data simply because there is no efficient way of eliminating such individual cases from the aggregate data.

This report is not intended to encourage a comparison of one school with another for no two schools serve communities that are exactly alike. It is intended to point to facts that will encourage school staffs, with Central Office administrative assistance, to take creative and positive steps that will motivate all Pittsburgh students to successfully complete their high school programs.

Richard C. Wallace, Superintendent
Pittsburgh Public Schools

HOLDING POWER IN PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1984 - 1985

Annual City-Wide Holding Power.....93.2

Cumulative City-Wide Holding Power.....75.3

Grade 9 Drop-Outs	Grade 10 Drop-Outs	Grade 11 Drop-Outs	Grade 12 Drop-Outs	Exc. Drop-Outs	Total Drop-Outs	Enroll	AHP	CHP
181	246	234	193	76	930	13657	93.2	75.3

THE COMPUTATION OF HOLDING POWER IN PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1984 - 1985

The use of different methods of gathering data and doing computation in determining holding power has resulted in studies which cannot be used to compare school systems in any meaningful way, and the value to be derived from such studies are diminished.

Some of the variables are:

a. Who is considered a drop-out?
b. What constitutes a pupil population?
c. What time period is covered by a report?
d. Annual Holding Power vs. Cumulative Holding Power.

a. The U.S. Office of Education defines a drop-out as: "A pupil who leaves school, for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school." We in the Pittsburgh Public Schools have qualified the above characteristics, with the approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, to exclude those students who: (1) Enter Federal Programs such as Job Corps or the Neighborhood Youth Corps. (2) Entered a correctional institution at an age where returning to school seems probable, (under 18 years). (3) Re-entered school after previously dropping out and leaving school again.

b. The pupil population is expressed as those pupils the schools are accountable for on a specific date, usually the Membership Report figures for that year. Thus arithmetic accountability means that the schools are responsible for all pupils in membership plus those pupils who have dropped out during the year according to CAPAS.

c. The Pittsburgh Public Schools Holding-Power study begins July 1 and ends June 30.

d. ANNUAL HOLDING POWER is represented by the percent of pupils in the Membership Report compared to the number for which the school is arithmetically accountable. Arithmetic accountability equals membership plus drop-outs. A specific example of how annual holding power is computed for X High School:

$$\text{Annual Holding Power} = \frac{\text{End of year enrollment}}{\text{End of year enrollment + drop-outs}}$$

$$\text{Annual Holding Power} = \frac{1292}{1292 + 87} = \frac{1292}{1379} = 93.7$$

Annual Holding Power for X High School = 93.7%

(Computation of Holding Power Continued)

CUMULATIVE HOLDING POWER represents the percent of pupils, exclusive of pupils in the Division of Exceptional Children, who remain in school until graduation. It is found by computing the percent of drop-outs for each grade level and subtracting that number, cumulatively, from a hypothetical group of 1,000 pupils entering the lowest grade level served by the school.

Example - X High School

Of 1,000 students starting grade 9,	25/339 or 7.4% dropped out.	1000	-	(.074 x 1000)	=	926.
Of 926 students starting grade 10,	17/331 or 5.1% dropped out.	926	-	(.051 x 926)	=	878.7
Of 878.7 students starting grade 11,	14/232 or 6.0% dropped out.	878.7	-	(.060 x 878.7)	=	826.1
Of 826.1 students starting grade 12,	15/276 or 5.4% dropped out,	826.1	-	(.054 x 826.1)	=	781.5

Cumulative Holding Power for X High School = 78.2%

In this case a student who drops out in grade 9 is counted as a drop-out in grade 9. He is also counted against grade 10 holding power because he never reaches grade 10; nor grade 11; etc. This one student is, in effect, counted against the holding power of a four year high school four (4) times.

CLASSIFICATION OF DROP-OUTS IN PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1984 - 1985

This report classifies drop-outs according to the Withdrawal Codes used by CAPAS. These Withdrawal Codes are as follows:

W-6 ..... Quit school after passing required attendance age

W-7 ..... Issued a General Employment Certificate

W-8 ..... Issued a Domestic Service Exemption Permit

W-12 ..... Committed to correctional institutions (Under 18 years of age)

W-13 ..... Enlisted in the Armed Forces

Code		Number of Withdrawals Black	Other	Total
W-6	(Overage)	385	469	854
W-7	(Work)	0	52	52
W-8	(Domestic)	10	11	21
W-12	(Institutionalized)	0	0	0
W-13	(Military)	0	3	3

ANNUAL HOLDING POWER BY SCHOOLS

1984 - 1985

School	AHP	Change from 1983-84
Allderdice	94.6	-2.1
Brashear	93.1	-0.2
CAPA	100.0	----
Carrick	93.5	-1.4
Langley	92.1	-0.9
Oliver	88.8	-5.1
Peabody	92.1	+0.3
Perry Traditional	98.6	+0.6
Schenley Teacher Center	95.0	+3.3
South/South Voc.Tech.	95.8	-1.1
South Hills	93.8	+0.6
Westinghouse	93.8	-0.2

CUMULATIVE HOLDING POWER BY SCHOOLS

1984 - 1985

School	CHP	Change from 1983-84
Allderdice	79.7	-8.7
Brashear	74.6	-2.1
Carrick	75.7	-5.9
CAPA	100.0	----
Langley	72.4	-4.1
Oliver	60.1	-18.3
Peabody	72.3	-0.2
Perry Traditional	95.4	+3.1
Schenley Teacher Center	80.7	+6.4
South/South Voc.Tech.	82.8	-7.4
South Hills	83.8	+6.1
Westinghouse	76.3	-1.6

HOLDING POWER IN PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1984 - 1985

A Comparative Review of the Five Most Recent Holding Power Studies Covering School Years 1980-1981 through 1983-1984

	84-85	83-84	82-83	81-82	80-81
Annual Holding Power.....	93.2%	93.9%	92.9%	92.2%	91.7%
Cumulative Holding Power.....	75.3%	78.9%	75.8%	73.4%	71.9%
Grade in Which Largest Number of Drop-Outs Occurred.....	10	9	10	9	9
Percentage of Drop-Outs Who Entered Full-Time Employment.....	5.1%	7.1%	7.6%	7.7%	10.6%
Number of Twelfth Grade Withdrawals.....	193	170	205	200	255